



DEPARTMENT OF
PLANNING AND ZONING

Marsha S. McLaughlin, Director

TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT

March 23, 2012

*Planning Board Meeting of April 18, 2012
County Council Hearing to be scheduled*

Case No. /Petitioner: Marsha S. McLaughlin, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning

Request: An ACT adopting *PlanHoward 2030* as the comprehensive general plan for Howard County, Maryland, for the purpose of planning for land use and land conservation and multiyear development planning for transportation, public facilities, water, sewerage, parkland, housing, human services, and environmental protection, and generally relating to planning, zoning and land use in Howard County, Maryland.

Department of Planning and Zoning recommendation:

Approval

I. BACKGROUND

Howard County Code sets out the parameters for updating the general plan. The applicable regulation, which can be found in section 16.801(c)(1) of the Howard County Code, sets forth duties and responsibilities of the Department of Planning and Zoning related to the comprehensive general plan:

Comprehensive general plan. Within five years from the adoption of the comprehensive rezoning plan, the Department of Planning and Zoning shall coordinate the preparation and revision of a general plan for the County, including but not limited to a plan for land use and land conservation and multiyear development plans for transportation, public facilities, water, sewerage, parkland, housing, human services and environmental protection. The General Plan shall follow general guidelines promulgated by the Planning Board and adopted by the County Council.

The code also requires that the planning process obtain public input in two phases. The first phase involves developing General Plan Guidelines (Guidelines), which are used to prepare the content of the plan. The Guidelines for *PlanHoward 2030* were developed with feedback from the General Plan Task Force, reviewed by the Planning Board on May 26, 2011, and subsequently approved by County Council on July 28, 2011, via Resolution No. 117-2011. The second phase involves the preparation of the plan itself, with input received via public hearing(s). Per Howard County Code, Section 16.900(i):

Hearings. Prior to making recommendations to the County Council on adoption of the general plan, the Planning Board shall hold at least one public hearing at which interested persons shall be afforded a reasonable opportunity to be heard regarding the general plan.

A draft of *PlanHoward 2030* has been presented to the Planning Board for its recommendations prior to submittal to the County Council for adoption. *PlanHoward 2030* has been devised to complement *PlanMaryland*, Maryland's first statewide comprehensive plan for sustainable growth and development, which was completed in December, 2011. *PlanHoward 2030* is organized around the 12 State Planning Visions, which are addressed within the context of promoting sustainability and quality of life. *PlanHoward 2030* is a strategic plan for long-term sustainability. As such, the core chapters of the document focus on the primary aspects of sustainability: environment, economy, and community.

II. DESCRIPTION

PlanHoward 2030 contains twelve chapters grouped into five sections. The first section contains introductory material and lays the foundation for the core elements of the plan. The three primary sections (Sections II, III, and IV) focus on the three pillars of sustainability: environment, economy, and community. The last section contains chapters focusing on implementation. This includes actions that the County can take towards achieving the plan's goals, as well as things residents and businesses can do, both individually and in partnership, to help protect and enhance the County's high quality of life.

Each chapter in *PlanHoward 2030* highlights a corresponding state vision that helps frame the context of the chapter's content. Other elements of each chapter include a brief description of the County's progress toward goals identified in *General Plan 2000*, as well as proposed policies with implementing actions. Overall, there are 76 policies with 247 corresponding implementing actions. All of these policies and actions are presented in Appendix B, and each is prioritized as short-, mid-, or long-term.

In an effort to make *PlanHoward 2030* a reflection of the community and to highlight the importance of everyone's contribution to the success of the plan, *PlanHoward 2030* includes both art work provided by Howard County students and quotes gathered during DPZ's youth outreach. Finally, *PlanHoward 2030* is filled with 'Green Tips' to provide useful information towards a more sustainable Howard County.

III. RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Planning and Zoning recommends **approval** of *PlanHoward 2030*.

 3/23/12
Marsha S. McLaughlin, Director Date

Attachment

- Preliminary Draft of *PlanHoward 2030*